

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INR-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

OMB-01 /062 W

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R 201215Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2925

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY ISLAMBAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 1965

E.O. 116" GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, CE

SUBJ: CEYLONese REACTION TO MRS. GANDHI'S WOES

REF: STATE 141342

1. CEYLONese PRESS HAS GIVEN PROMINENT AND EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO DECISION AGAINST MRS GANDHI AS WELL AS CONGRESS LOSS IN GUJERAT. TOP COVERAGE WAS ALSO GIVEN TO AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE REPORT OF PRIME MINISTER BANDARANAIKE'S MESSAGE TO MRS GANDHI. IN IT MRS BANDARANAIKE SAID SHE WAS "DEEPLY SHOCKED" TO HEAR THE VERDICT OF THE ALLAHABAD HIGH COURT AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT MRS GANDHI WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL IN HER APPEAL TO THE SUPREME COURT AGAINST THE VERDICT. MRS BANDARANAIKE ALSO CONVEYED "HER SINCERE CONCERN" AT THE TURN OF EVENTS. POINT ALSO MADE THAT PRIME MINISTER BANDARANAIKE WAS FIRST FOREIGN LEADER TO COMMENT ON ACTION AGAINST MRS GANDHI.

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2. STRIDENTLY ANTI-US STORIES AND COMMENT IN

LEFTIST PRESS HAVE ATTRIBUTED MRS GANDHI'S MISFORTUNES TO REACTIONARY PLOTS SUPPORTED BY AMERICAN MONEY AND CIA. FOLLOWING QUOTE FROM LSSP (TROTSKYITE)-CONTROLLED JANADINA IS SAMPLE: "NO DOUBT MRS GANDHI WOULD HAVE BEEN SUBJECT TO THE WRATH OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE AMERICAN CIA, DUE TO HER COURAGEOUS ACTIONS OF REMOVING THE ASIA FOUNDATION OFFICE IN INDIA, AND THE CONTROLLING OF THE RUPEE ACCOUNT OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN INDIA." SIMILAR ATTACKS HAVE CONTINUED OFF AND ON SINCE STORY FIRST BROKE.

3. EDITORIAL IN GOVT-CONTROLLED CEYLON DAILY NEWS JUNE 20 ECHOED LEFTIST THEME OBLIQUELY. DAILY NEWS ARGUED THAT MRS GANDHI WAS GUILTY OF MERE TECHNICALITY OF LAW BUT THAT INDIAN NEWS MEDIA, "STILL EFFECITVELY CONTROLLED BY FOREIGN INTERESTS", HAVE DELIBERATELY MISLED PUBLIC. IT THEN CONTINUES: "MORE SINISTER EXPLANATIONS WILL OCCUR TO PEOPLE WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH TECHNIQUES OF BIG POWER INTERVENTION IN AFFAIRS OF NOT-SO-FAVORED NATIONS".

4. THERE IS SOME CONCERN IN OFFICIAL CIRCLES THAT MRS GANDHI'S CURRENT DIFFICULTIES COULD CREATE PROBLEMS FOR SRI LANKA BY WEAKENING HER POSITION AND THAT OF CENTRE, THEREBY INCREASING POWER OF REGIONAL GOVERNMENT IN TAMIL NADU WHICH CEYLONESE BELIEVE IS MORE APT TO INTERFERE IN LOCAL AFFAIRS. THIS OPINION REFLECTS VERY GOOD STATE OF INDO-CEYLONESE RELATIONS WHICH NEW DELHI HAS CAREFULLY NURTURED OVER PAST TWO YEARS AS WELL AS NAGGING ANXIETY AMONG CEYLONESE OFFICIALS OVER LIMITED BUT INCREASING EVIDENCE OF MORE RADICAL APPROACH BY CEYLON TAMILS TOWARD QUESTION OF SEPARATE TAMIL STATE IN NORTHERN SRI LANKA.
VAN HOLLEN

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